



ParentInfo

News for a child's most important educator

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Mixed screener results on students' readiness for kindergarten

While Kentucky students are generally socially and emotionally ready to start kindergarten, the majority are not ready to succeed academically, according to pilot data released recently by the Kentucky Department of Education.

At the beginning of the 2012-13 school year, teachers administered the BRIGANCE K Screen to 31,480 kindergarten students in 458 schools across 109 districts in the state as part of a volunteer pilot. The common kindergarten screener does not determine whether a child can enroll in school but rather how well he or she is prepared to succeed at the time the screen is administered. Based on student responses and their age, students fell into one of three readiness categories: ready with supports, ready or ready with enrichments.

2012-13 KINDERGARTEN READINESS PILOT			
	Ready with Supports	Ready	Ready with Enrichments
Students in pilot	71.8%	18.9%	9.3%

See *Kindergarten readiness* on Page 5





MAKING SENSE OF CENTS WITH ONLINE FINANCIAL LITERACY GAME

April designated as Financial Literacy Month

April is Financial Literacy Month, and the National Center for Family Literacy (based in Louisville) and the Dollar General Literacy Foundation have partnered to promote the importance of children learning about proper money management.

"A Day at Dollar General: Learn While Shopping," is an online interactive game that makes learning basic budgeting skills fun and educational for both children and parents.

The game helps families start the conversation about money management and focuses on parents and children learning together about making smart choices with money.

Through the virtual experience of shopping in a Dollar General store, families will learn how to budget, plan a shopping trip, spend wisely and manage money.

Each of the four lessons has games as well as key terms and quizzes to help guide children through budgeting, saving and purchasing experiences.

Go to www.familit.org/dayatdollargeneral/ to view the game. For more information, go to the National Center for Family Literacy website at www.familit.org/.

For more information about financial literacy education, [click here](#).

Gatton Academy selects students for class of 2015

The Carol Martin Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky has selected 72 students for its Class of 2015.

These students hail from 44 different Kentucky counties. To date, the Gatton Academy has admitted students from 110 of Kentucky's 120 counties.

In the fall, approximately 280 Kentucky sophomores started the application process with 180 students qualifying for review. Applicants were evaluated based on ACT/SAT scores, high school grades, awards, extracurricular activities, responses to essay questions and letters of recommendation. Last month, 100 candidates were invited to interview with community leaders and academy staff.

"In our seventh year of recruiting, we continue to see an incredible depth of outstanding students who apply," said Tim Gott, director of the Gatton Academy. "The process to choose only 72 students was more challenging than ever before. This is certainly a powerful acknowledgement of the caliber of Kentucky's students."

See Gatton on Page 4

Opportunity to improve teen health, youth leadership and civic engagements in school and community

The Kentucky Teen Institute (KTI), a program of the Kentucky YMCA Youth Association in partnership with the University of Louisville, is accepting applications for its leadership program for high school age youth.

Applications are due April 23.

KTI develops the leadership capacity of teens to lead the way to greater health in Kentucky. Through dynamic educational programming, teams of young people from across the state are trained to implement health initiatives in their communities and transform themselves in the process.

Participants to KTI apply in teams of two to six high school students and one adult advisor. Adult advisors can be parents, teachers, counselors, coaches, religious leaders and more.

Attending KTI costs a team \$200. Participants will receive nine months of training, including a Summer Summit (June 23-27 in Louisville), Winter Summit and advocacy day in Frankfort.

Why should your teen apply?

- Students will have the opportunity to learn health promotion skills and prevention techniques that will make their school and community safer and healthier through peer-to-peer youth leadership on these important issues.
- Student-led action plans positively impact Program Reviews, such as providing students opportunities to develop leadership skills in extracurricular activities, developing student organizations to encourage leadership-skills development and collaborating with community/business partners.
- Adult advisors (such as parents, teachers or counselors) will receive specialized training on youth-engagement, teen health issues and action plan implementation.



- Both adults and teens will have fun learning about health issues, making new friends and feeling inspired to make positive changes.

The Kentucky Teen Institute's programming is developed through an intergenerational partnership made up of an adult director and youth advisory board of college and high school students. This year's Youth Advisory Board chose the following topics to concentrate on during programming:

1. bullying prevention
2. obesity prevention
3. underage substance abuse prevention
4. teen pregnancy prevention
5. creating a college-going culture

Learn more about KTI through its [website](http://kyymca.org/programs/kti). Visit <http://kyymca.org/programs/kti> to download application materials.

Gatton, from Page 2

The selected students scored an average composite of 30.2 (out of 36) on the ACT and 29.2 on the mathematics portion of the exam.

This year, four counties had students admitted to the Gatton Academy for the first time: Ballard, Hickman, Jackson and Lee. To date, the Gatton Academy has admitted students from 110 of Kentucky's 120 counties.

Students will complete their junior and senior years of high school living in Schneider Hall and taking courses offered by Western Kentucky University. At the end of their two-year course of study, they will graduate from high school and have earned at least 60 college credit hours.

The Gatton Academy is Kentucky's only state-supported, residential program for high school students with interests in advanced science and mathematics careers and one of only 15 such programs in the nation. In 2012, *Newsweek* named the Gatton Academy the nation's top public high school.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the Gatton Academy and to see a list of students in the Class of 2015.

Kentucky Department of Education**Address:**

Division of Communications
500 Mero St., 6th floor, CPT
Frankfort, KY 40601

Phone: (502) 564-2000

Fax: (502) 564-3049

Contact:

susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

Governor excited to sign long-awaited Graduation Bill

Calling it "one of my most satisfying acts as governor," Gov. Steve Beshear recently signed into law the Graduation Bill (Senate Bill 97), which will keep Kentucky students enrolled in school until they turn 18.

Beshear and First Lady Jane Beshear have joined educators and child advocates to fight for this bill's passage for the past five legislative sessions. A late-session compromise among legislators led to the approval of SB97, which allows school districts to opt in to the higher dropout age immediately. Once 55 percent of school districts adopt the policy, all remaining districts must then adopt the standard within four years.

"Finally, we have agreed to stop jeopardizing our students' futures by allowing them to leave school before they're even eligible for a driver's license. Now, we are holding them to 21st century expectations of education and training," Gov. Beshear said. "The days of dropping out of high school and expecting a dependable, well-paying job are long gone."

"Allowing students to leave school at 16 is an antiquated practice that has hindered our citizens' progress for far too long," Jane Beshear said. "School districts now have the tools to keep these students engaged and learning throughout high school, creating stronger, self-sufficient adults who will be responsible, contributing members of their communities."

High school graduates provide both economic and social benefits to society. In addition to earning higher wages, research shows that high school graduates live longer, are less likely to be teen parents and are more likely to raise healthier, better-educated children.

Studies also show that high school graduates are less likely to commit crimes, rely on government healthcare or use other public services such as food stamps or housing assistance.

If the high school dropouts of 2009 had graduated, Kentucky's economy would have an additional \$4.2 billion in wages over those students' lifetimes.

"This bill is an economic win for Kentucky and an even bigger win for the students who otherwise may not have stayed in school," Education Commissioner Terry Holliday said. "I echo the Governor's appreciation for the General Assembly and others who supported this bill and thank him as well as the First Lady for their continued leadership."

Kindergarten readiness, from Page 1

Only 28 percent of incoming kindergarten students in the pilot were ready to succeed without some additional supports.

"These results clearly show many of our students are starting school at a disadvantage, often without the basic foundation on which to build academically," Education Commissioner Terry Holliday said. "It is critical that young children are exposed to high-quality learning environments and developmentally appropriate experiences at home and in early childhood education settings to promote success in kindergarten and throughout their school experience."

The common kindergarten screen, as outlined in [704 KAR 5:070](#), provides teachers key information, early in the school year, that they can use to guide instruction in order to meet the individual needs of all students. The screener is aligned to both [Kentucky's School Readiness Definition](#) and [Kentucky's Early Childhood Standards](#).

As part of the basic screen, students are asked questions, such as their name, letters, numbers and colors, in three domains: Cognitive/General Knowledge; Language and Communications; and Physical Well-Being.

2012-13 PILOT	
BASIC KINDERGARTEN SCREEN	
Domain	Average/Above Average
Cognitive/General Knowledge	59.3%
Language and Communications	39.6%
Physical Well-being	49.5%

In addition to the basic screen, parents filled out a social-emotional/self-help questionnaire that asks about personal qualities, such as whether a child uses eating utensils, brushes his or her teeth or can use the bathroom independently. A total of 29,165 surveys were completed and returned. Kentucky students fared much better in these areas.

2012-13 PILOT	
SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL AND SELF-HELPSKILLS SCREEN	
Domain	Average/Above Average
Social-Emotional Development	79.6%
Self-help Skills	70.8%

Combined, the screen data gives teachers a better idea of the whole child than they may otherwise have at the beginning of the school year and tells educators what they may need to focus on or supports that may need to be provided to ensure school success.

Until now, there has been no way for education officials, lawmakers and the public to get reliable, comparable data from across the state about how ready children are to start school. Each year more than 50,000 students enroll in public school kindergarten in Kentucky.

The Kentucky Department of Education and the [Governor's Office of Early Childhood](#) encourage communities and school districts to enhance supports and resources for families, early childhood programs and communities in the areas of cognitive, language and motor development for young children, birth to 5 years old.

Statewide administration of the Kindergarten Readiness Screener will begin with the 2013-14 school year. In addition to helping teachers meet individual student needs, the data also will help schools improve their K-3 programs.



Crittenden County school buses getting cleaner, greener

Gov. Steve Beshear announced recently that the Kentucky Division for Air Quality (DAQ) has awarded Crittenden County Board of Education \$80,000 to reduce diesel emissions from its school bus fleet.

The funds were made available through the federal Environmental Protection Agency's Diesel Emission Reduction Act.

"I applaud Crittenden County Board of Education for its leadership in building a greener fleet, including Kentucky's first propane-powered bus for student transportation," Beshear said. "Reducing diesel emissions from school buses means cleaner air for our most precious resource – our kids."

The project will replace one 1992 model diesel school bus with a 2014 model school bus powered by propane autogas.

Propane autogas burns cleaner than diesel, producing fewer smog-producing hydrocarbons and virtually eliminating emissions of particulate matter.

Particulate matter is linked to increased

risk of stroke, heart attack and other serious health problems.

"The Crittenden County Board of Education is excited about the opportunity to pilot the first propane school bus in the Commonwealth," Crittenden County school district Superintendent Rachel Yarbrough said. "The Kentucky Clean Diesel Grant awarded to the Crittenden County Schools creates a new energy efficient pathway that will benefit our students and the community."

The project also will retrofit an additional 14 diesel school buses with emission-control technologies, reducing tailpipe emissions of particulate matter by nearly 50 percent.

"Retrofitting school buses can make a real difference for cleaner air," DAQ Director John Lyons said. "Buses travel on a large percentage of an area's roads, making frequent stops and starts. Emissions also can travel inside the school bus each time the doors are opened, so these retrofits will benefit the health of drivers and students on those buses."